

## **EXHIBIT 11**

January 22nd, 2012

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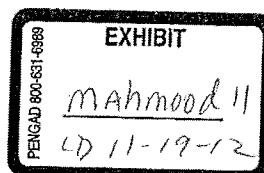
To the USMLE Committee for Individualized Review,

I am writing to you in response to the letter from the NBME dated August 24th, 2011 concerning the matter of Irregular Behavior on the day of August 8th, 2011. I ask that I may be allowed to continue to take the USMLE Step exams so that I may complete my medical training.

I was officially diagnosed with depression in 2008. I sought treatment with the counseling service at my school the day my med school advisor, a security officer, and the residence director had to unlock my apartment to perform a suicide check. That was when I rose out of denial of my disease. However, I had just finished my Psychiatry rotation, and so was very apprehensive about starting any medication; I had seen far too many side effects manifesting themselves in my patients and could not bear the thought of affecting my only true asset: my mind. I was given a great deal of leeway by my med school and had a few months of scattered Medical Leave in between my clinical rotations. Despite my physical handicap (visual impairment via oculocutaneous albinism, vision: 20/200), and this new ailment, I still managed to scrape though the remaining requirements for graduation, except for the USMLE Step 2 CK & CS exams.

Since the beginning of 2010, I have felt my symptoms worsening. Crippling self doubt, feelings of worthlessness as well as the beginning of the payment schedule for my sizeable educational loans, putting further strain on the family coffers in the way of psychiatric treatment did not seem to be an option. I had also been spending effort into convincing my family of the need for treatment. Although convinced for the most part that I was suffering depression, the thought of seeking treatment for a psychiatric disorder was distasteful. Studying for the Step exams was a monumental task, and while practicing with a question bank, the number of times I changed my answer far outweighed, by several fold, the amount questions I attempted. Considering these factors I postponed the exam a few times, while at other times there were technical problems at the center, such as my Candidate ID Number not allowing access to the test, a monitor that would not load the ZoomText software, or, as was the case on the day of August 8th, 2011, the monitor was obviously broken, the screen was separate from its stand and perched precariously on the edge of the table with exposed wires leading to the monitor stand and to the power outlet. The center had only one working station for a student with testing accommodations, which was in use by another student.

I am also of considerable age, 32, relative to my peers who are nearing the end of their residency training at my age. I felt the need to finish my education as quickly as possible. I was rapidly approaching the 7-year mark for finishing a medical degree and I had to take and at the very least pass the USMLE Step 2 CK and CS before the end of August, 2011. There was also the specter of my father's looming semi-forced retirement from government employment, which essentially meant the cessation of 2/3rd of the household income. My brother had over past several years, since approximately my admission into medical school, retreated completely into his bedroom. He developed symptoms of severe OCD and had reduced his course load to one class per semester because he felt he could not handle the extra work. It became obvious to me



that I would be responsible for his well-being and living expenses, along with my parents, for the foreseeable future.

I am very ashamed to write that all these factors lead to further deterioration of my mental state, to the point where I came to conclusions that were normally abhorrent to me. Every time I thought about the idea of sitting for the exam, feelings of anxiety about a possible failure and what that would lead to, left me paralyzed with fear. On the morning of the exam I awoke in a state of extreme panic. I felt I needed a respite from all of this and the only way I could fathom was to create a diversion that would delay my exam for a time. I regret that I was not in adequate enough possession of my mental faculties to consider the consequences of my actions on the other students who were sitting for their various tests at the same center, and on my family for the emotional and financial burden I placed on them.

This incident has proven to my family and myself that we cannot afford not to seek treatment for my depression. Consequently, I have been regularly seeing a psychiatrist and have been taking medication appropriately since November, 2011. I have been able to resolve, in court, my arrest and detainment. The Judge and Assistant District Attorney have been very concerned and proactive, working with my lawyer to come to a conclusion that will leave me without a conviction, acknowledging the factors that lead to the aberrant behavior.

I am attaching the following documentation to attest for my case: a forensic psychiatric report obtained in October, 2011, before treatment, and notes from my psychiatrist. I have not yet been reimbursed for the scheduling fees for the Step 2 CS exam, as was stated in the letter sent from the NBME regarding this matter. On the day of August 8th, 2011, I began the tutorial for the test but was not able to begin the exam proper; I did not see any scored questions. I ask that the exam fee be reimbursed and the attempt not be included in my number of attempts for the Step 2 CK, considering the inadequacy of the testing equipment and other factors as stated above. The sums of money are a significantly large number, and would help a lot.

In light of the above, I humbly ask that the Committee consider allowing me to schedule and sit for the remaining exams, so that I may successfully graduate medical school. This has been an excruciating personal ordeal, however with treatment, I can confidently write that I am in good spirits and feel up to the task of my responsibilities, something I have not experienced in years. I am able to accomplish the goals I set for myself, instead of agonizing about doing them. I would also request that this incident not be a permanent blemish on my record, so that I may still harbor a good chance of gaining a residency position. I never had any intention of harming or cause problems for anyone else, or undermining the security or integrity of the exam. Please take this into consideration when presiding over my case.

Sincerely,



Maria Mahmood

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